

# Kyodan

## News Letter

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### TOWARD THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(im)

With a somewhat creaky sound, the door to the possibility of holding a Kyodan General Assembly opened by a slight crack at the end of a 4 1/2 hour meeting of the Kyodan Executive Committee which followed the noon adjournment of the Consultation on Kyodan Issues held March 13-15 (see page 2). Present along with seventeen members of the Executive Committee were the district moderators or their alternates, Kyodan executive secretaries and church news reporters.

Frank and even bitter criticism of the Executive Committee was expressed by some of the district representatives for the failure to resolve the Kyodan impasse. After much reflection and self-criticism, the Committee passed the following resolutions:

1. To express the sense of repentance (kuiaratame) of the Executive Committee for its failure to resolve the issues sufficiently to hold a General Assembly.
2. To work for the holding of the next General Assembly in October 1972.
3. To build the agenda of the next General Assembly on the five pillars (hashira) of the church's mission, the assembly system, the Confession of Faith, the relation of church and society, and the Ministerial Orders. All these would be given careful review.
4. To appoint the Rev. Kikaku Shimamura chairman of the Assembly Preparations Committee.
5. To appoint a committee to draft for presentation at the next Assembly a document entitled "Evaluation and Perspective of the Executive Committee" (jogiinkai no hyoka to tembo).

Moderator Mitsuho Yoshida pledged himself and the Executive Committee to work with the greatest earnestness for the restoration of the Kyodan to unity and mission.

The statement of purpose and direction for the convening of the 17th General Assembly reads:

Accepting in all seriousness the events that have occurred in the Kyodan in the past three years as being the questioning of us by God, and in the spirit of deep repentance, we resolve to deal faithfully with these issues.



CONSULTATION ON KYODAN ISSUES

(im)

The second Consultation on Issues Confronting the Kyodan was held March 13-15 at Amagi Sanso, focussing on the Kyodan Confession of Faith. The list of participants included 20 members of the Kyodan Executive Committee (hitherto known as the Standing Committee), the moderators of the 16 districts or their alternates, 39 persons nominated by the districts, 27 persons nominated by the Executive Committee, including 2 missionaries, six Kyodan executive secretaries, office staff and church reporters--122 persons in all.

The rationale for choosing the Confession of Faith as the theme was the need of finding a common basis of agreement from which the Kyodan could begin to untangle the knotty issues which have polarized the church and paralyzed its legislative organs. Affirming that this theme avoided the basic issues more than it provided a basis of agreement, four nominees, including a missionary, refused to attend.

Several papers were presented and debated in the general forum, and further discussion was carried on in two sessions by five groups. The discussions were spirited and frank but courteous, and adhered to the theme most of the time. Occasional references were made to some of the concrete issues such as the Expo Christian Pavilion and the Tokyo Union Theological Seminary (TUTS) problem, with special critical reference to the summoning of the riot police, but none of these matters was pursued intensively, and the spirit prevailing was much more that of dialogue than had characterized the June 1971 Consultation, according to some who had attended both.

While there were a few members who seemed to be promoting an appeal to the Confession of Faith as a means of weeding dissidents out of the church, the overall atmosphere towards the end was one of repudiating the use of the Confession as an instrument of heresy hunting.

The Moderator's Summary Report (sokatsu hokoku) came in for a good amount of criticism on the basis of its lack of accreditation by any official endorsement from the Executive Committee.

Nothing conclusive could be decided, but the sense of mutual recognition of each other as persons to whom respect was due, over and beyond the deep theological divergencies, cast a ray of hope for the possibility of future dialogue, carried on without resort to the kind of rancorous exchange and threatened violence that has characterized most confrontations between students, laymen and pastors in the various Kyodan committees and assemblies held during the past two and a half years. It remains to be seen whether the sun of reason and orderly debate will break through the clouds of distrust and hostility.

A NEW PROGRAM OF MUTUAL STUDY FOR PASTORS was approved by the Kyodan Standing Executive Committee at its March 6 meeting, as a joint project of the Kyodan and the Evangelische Kirche de Union. The purposes of the program are:

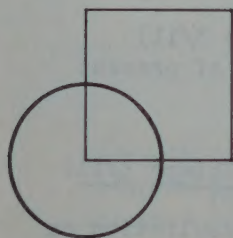
- . to broaden the social perspectives and nurture a sensitivity to things happening in the modern world that the pastor dare not ignore
- . to stimulate a sense of human solidarity among pastors through the experience of living and studying together
- . to establish a view toward theology (Gemeine Theologie) that is concerned not only with theology as knowledge but with its effect on the living church.



The program will provide annually for a week-long group study experience for approximately 16 persons, one from each district, with the expectation that pastors from other Asian countries will also participate. This condition was requested by the Kyodan in keeping with the Confession of War Responsibility.

The program for the 1972 fiscal year will be held by the end of February 1973. The German Church will contribute ¥2,300,000 to be used to help establish the program and carry out the first study meeting. Beginning next year, the German Church will provide funds for the establishment of an endowment fund of ¥30,000,000, the income from which will be used to maintain the program in the future. The Kyodan expects to make a contribution of ¥500,000 to the program in 1973 and to make contributions enlarging the endowment in the future.

toray puts oil in its wicks



Anticipating a possible "Jesus Christ boom" in Japan, Toyo Rayon ("toray"), one of Japan's largest manufacturers of synthetics and clothing, has registered as a trademark a tiny emblem containing the drawing of Jesus Christ appearing on the cover of the currently popular record, "Jesus Christ Jesus Christ" sung by Peter McLaine. In the three months since the half-size disc was introduced onto the Japanese market more than 100,000 copies have been sold. Meanwhile, both "Jesus Christ Superstar" and "Godspell" are available but selling at more modest pace.

Shukan Gendai, a mass weekly, recently reported comments of some commercial establishments, apropos the "Jesus Christ boom":

**Toray Business Office:**

To offer society, through the medium of fashion, the opportunity to think again about the Christian spirit--that is work worth doing.

**Mr. Ikuta, Japan Victor MCA:**

The Jesus Christ incognito is already present in Japanese rock music and folk songs. Two thousand young people come to hear folk singers like Okabayashi and Takaishi. Okabayashi and Takaishi don't talk about "Jesus Christ" by name but they talk about love, they sing about peace, and they sound out a cry from the depths of life. Love and peace are the bridge by which one crosses over into the sympathies of the young people. There is a good possibility that the Second Coming of Jesus will take place--the coming of Jesus into the hearts of the young people in Japan.

**Mr. Hamano, Hamano Products:**

The new life style of young people is a revival of humanity, love, peace, luck and nature. And these are indeed the life style of Jesus Christ. In this sense, Jesus Christ is the Superstar which evokes the sympathies of the young people.

Asked what the popularity of "Jesus Christ Superstar" might mean for the church, two persons--one a former secretary of youth work, the other a student recently returned from the United States, both replied to the effect that "the church would probably feel that it would have to give a theological explanation of the meaning of the music rather than letting it rest with the feeling. The church is too square...."



what has been -- I N T H E K Y O D A N -- what is to be

## I. Coming Events

- Council of Cooperation Full Meeting to take place April 20-21
- NCC Consultation on The Responsibility of the Church for Theological Education to be held in Karuizawa April 13-15
- Four Korean church women leaders to visit Japan in May at invitation of National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies

## II. Recent Events

### Education

- Education Comm. to lend money to church kindergartens for improvement of facilities (Shimbun 3/18)
- Government aid to be available for religious juridical body kindergartens (Shimbun 3/11)
- Education Comm. publishes "The Present Generation of Youth" (Shimpo 3/18) also see "Coming Events" and "Okinawa"

### Faith and Order

- Faith and Order Comm. issues view on Confession (Shimpo 3/11)
- Kyodan Laymen's Assoc. calls for continuing observance of present Confession of Faith (Shimbun 3/11)

### Kyodan

- Executive Comm. discusses Moderator's Sokatsu hokoku (Shimpo 3/11)
- Schedule announced for district assemblies (Shimpo 3/18)
- Six organizations issue joint statement critical of Consultation on Kyodan issues (Shimbun 3/18)
- Conference on Confession of Faith March 13-15 provides arena for exchange of opinion in improved mood of mutual respect (News Letter 3/20)
- Executive Comm. appoints Assembly Preparations Committee looking toward holding of 17th General Assembly in Oct. (News Letter 3/20)

### Okinawa

- Executive Comm. votes to conduct ¥16.5 million fund campaign for Okinawa Christian College (Shimpo 3/4)

### Social

- People from many walks of life attend party celebrating publication of Tomura's book "The Japanese and the Yasukuni Problem" (Shimpo 3/18)
- NCC Div. of Service and Caritas-Japan recruit 50 young people for rice-planting mission in Bangladesh (Shimbun 3/11)
- 18 organizations criticize NET TV program that promotes Yasukuni Shrine as national shrine (Shimbun 3/4, Shimpo 3/4)

### Women

- Executive Comm. of National Federation meets March 10-11, discusses visit of Korean women, Constitutional revisions, women's home, and pamphlet for societies

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AVAILABLE--for the first time

An English translation of the Bylaws of The United Church of Christ in Japan. While not an "official" translation, the terminology, phrases and interpretation have been painstakingly checked by Peyton Palmore and Kazuyo Kishimoto. Copies of the 40-page transcript of the 172 articles of the Bylaws are available in offset form for ¥500 a copy from the Research Institute on Mission.